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1989/06/28

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17584
(E54) INCOMING
TELEGRAM

PAGE 01 OF 02 BEIJIN 17584 00 OF 03 2086372 4471 EAP3090
ACTION EAP-00

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BIKING HOMEWARD.

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ACTION OFFICE CN-05

INFO TC-01 P-01 RA-01 LAB-01 UN-01 EAP-05 /015 A2 DOK

INFO LOG-00 ADS-00 INR-07 EUR-00 SS-00 CIAE-00 N-01
NSC-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 NA-00 L-03 TRSE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2087

INFO AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY

AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU PRIORITY

AMCONSUL HONG KONG PRIORITY

AMCONSUL SHANGHAI PRIORITY

AMCONSUL SHENYANG PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

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AMCONSUL CHENGDU POUCH

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NSC FOR DOUG PAUL

CINCPAC FOR FPA FINNEY

E.O. 12356/DECL:OASD

TAGS: PG0V, PHUN, "BOCI", CN

REF: (U) BEIJING 16971; (U) BEIJING 16846

SUBJECT: TFCN01 -- TIANANMEN, JUNE 3-4: A PERSONAL
ACCOUNT

1. CONFIDENTIAL.

2. THE FOLLOWING REPORT IS CONOFF'S EYEWITNESS
ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS IN THE TIANANMEN VICINITY ON
THE NIGHT OF JUNE 3-4. THIS ACCOUNT, WRITTEN ON JUNE
4, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE EVENTS OF THE PRECEDING
NIGHT, IS BEING SENT NOW TO CLARIFY THE EVENTS ON
EAST AND WEST CHANGAN ROAD, WHERE MUCH OF THE
SHOOTING AND CASUALTIES OCCURRED.

SATURDAY EVENING, JUNE 3

3. 2230. WHEN THE TIANANMEN STUDENT LOUDSPEAKERS
ANNOUNCED THAT PLA FORCES HAD BEEN SUCCESSFULLY
TURNED BACK AT JIANGUCHEN, A WAVE OF RELIEF, EVEN A
SENSE OF EUPHORIA, SWEEPED THE CROWD OF 200,000
GATHERED IN TIANANMEN AND ON CHANGAN EAST ROAD.
ABOUT TEN THOUSAND DEMONSTRATORS THEN MOVED TO THE
NORTHEAST CORNER OF TIANANMEN SQUARE FOR A VICTORY
RALLY, WITH STUDENT LEADERS GIVING SPEECHES AND
INTRODUCING YAN JIAO, BEI DAO, WANG DAN, HE DAIJIAN,
AND OTHER WELL KNOWN PRO-DEMOCRACY LEADERS TO THE
CACKLING AUDIENCE. SPEAKERS PROCLAIMED "THE PEOPLE
ARE VICTORIOUS," "TODAY IS THE BEGINNING OF DEMOCRACY
IN CHINA," AND "NOW THE PARTY WILL BE REJUVENATED AND
DEMOCRATIZED." MOST OF THE OTHER DEMONSTRATORS BEGAN

4. COMMENT ON ANCITS IN TIANANMEN: AT THIS POINT,
CONOFF RETURNED TO THE BEIJING HOTEL; THERE HE
LEARNED FROM AMEMBASSY THAT A LARGE COLUMN OF APCs
AND TRUCKS WAS APPROACHING TIANANMEN FROM THE WEST.
HE WENT BACK TO THE SQUARE TO FIND AND INFORM ANCITS
AND TO URGE THEM TO LEAVE THE SQUARE IMMEDIATELY. OF
THE 20-25 ANCITS ENCOUNTERED -- MOST TOURISTS OR
STUDENTS -- ALL BUT SEVERAL TELEVISION CAMERAMEN
APPEAR TO HAVE LEFT THE SQUARE AT THAT TIME.
CONTINUING WESTWARD TO XIDAN, CONOFF MET SEVERAL MORE
ANCITS; BY THAT TIME, APCs HAD ARRIVED AND PLA
SHOOTING WAS INTENSE, SO CONOFF LED THESE ANCITS TO
AN ALLEY, WHICH THEY FOLLOWED AROUND TIANANMEN BACK
TO THE BEIJING HOTEL. THUS, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF
AMERICAN TELEVISION AND PRESS PERSONNEL, IT APPEARS
THAT VIRTUALLY ALL ANCITS HAD LEFT TIANANMEN BY THE
TIME THE APC COLUMN ARRIVED AT THE SQUARE. END
COMMENT.)

5. 2330. THE SELF-CONGRATULATORY SPEECHES WERE
INTERRUPTED BY AN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT PLA FORCES "HAVE
REACHED FUXINGHEN." THE RALLY BROKE UP AND THOUSANDS
OF DEMONSTRATORS BEGAN RUNNING WEST TOWARD XIDAN;
THEY RIPPED UP CONCRETE AND METAL ROAD DIVIDERS AND
OVERTURNED TRUCKS AND BUSES TO BUILD BARRICADES.

SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 4

6. 2405. A LONE APC SUDDENLY ROARED DOWN WEST
CHANGAN ROAD AT ABOUT 35 MPH, HEADING EAST TOWARD
TIANANMEN. PLOWING THROUGH THE DEMONSTRATORS AND
RUNNING OVER SOME, IT TURNED DOWN THE WEST SIDE OF
THE GREAT WALL OF THE PEOPLE (GHOPI) AND CAME TO A
HALT AT THE FOOT OF THE GHOP WESTERN STAIRCASE.
THOUSANDS OF ENRAGED DEMONSTRATORS RUSHED AFTER THE
APC, SURROUNDED IT AND BURNED CONCRETE BLOCKS, AND
CLIMBED ON TOP AND POUNDED ON THE METAL MACH.

7. 2440. AT ZHONGHANNAN, SEVERAL HUNDRED ARMED PLA
INFANTRY STREAMED OUT OF THE LEADERSHIP COMPOUND,
PUSHING DEMONSTRATORS FURTHER OUT INTO THE STREET.

8. 2455. TWO PLA TRUCKS JUST WEST OF ZHONGHANNAN,
CAPTURED AND DISABLED BY DEMONSTRATORS IN THE EARLY
AFTERNOON, WERE RIPPED APART FOR BLOCKADE MATERIAL.
THEN THEY AND SEVERAL CITY BUSES WERE SET ON FIRE.

9. 0100. AT THE CORNER OF NORTH XINQIA STREET, THE
FIRST DISTANT CONFIRE COULD BE HEARD IN THE VICINITY
OF THE HINZU HOTEL, A MILE FURTHER TO THE WEST; AN
ORANGE GLOW SPREAD DOWN THE LENGTH OF WEST CHANGAN
ROAD AS BUSES AND TRUCKS WERE OVERTURNED AND BURNED.
THE DENSELY PACKED CROWD AT THIS STREET CORNER
CONSISTED PRIMARILY OF LOCAL RESIDENTS AND YOUNG
WORKERS. AS THE GUNSHOTS GREW LOUDER AND THE FIRST
APC HEADLIGHTS CAME INTO VIEW MOVING SLOWLY EASTWARD,
A FEELING OF RAGE AMONG THE CROWD MOUNTED. "HOW CAN
CHINESE SHOOT CHINESE," CRIED ONE ELDERLY WOMAN. "WE
ARE THE PEOPLE, NOT THEM." A YOUNG MAN SHOUTED
POINTING TO ZHONGHANNAN, "THEY ARE GANGSTERS."

10. 0110. SUDDENLY, A DEEP RUMBLE CAME FROM THE
REAR OF THE CROWD AS IT FACED WEST. THE CROWD FLARED
APART IN TERROR AS THE BATTERED APC FROM THE GHOP
CAREENED BY AT TOP SPEED WESTWARD WITH A FIRE BLAZING
ON TOP. DEMONSTRATORS THREW LARGE CHUNKS OF CONCRETE
AT THE TRACKED WHEELS AND, MANGLED IN DEBRIS, THE APC

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PAGE #2 OF #2 BEIJIN 17584 00 OF 03 210637Z
GROUND TO A HALL 200 FEET WEST OF NORTH XINHUA
STREET. ENRAGED DEMONSTRATORS CONVERGED ON THE APC,
PILED EVERY AVAILABLE SCRAP OF FURNITURE AND WOOD
AROUND THE VEHICLE, AND SET IT ON FIRE. AFTER
SEVERAL MINUTES, THE HATCH BROKE OPEN AND A SOLDIER
JUMPED OUT; THE CROWD GRABBED AND BEAT HIM,
APPARENTLY TO DEATH. A SECOND SOLDIER WAS SURROUNDED
BY SEVERAL STUDENTS WHO PROTECTED HIM FROM THE ANGRY
CROWD, AND A THIRD SOLDIER WAS PULLED OUT DEAD.

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BEIJIN 17584 00 OF 03 210637Z

4471 EAP3090

17. 0530. A SECOND COLUMN OF ABOUT 50 APCs, TANKS,
AND TRUCKS ROARED BY ON EAST CHANGAN ROAD AND ENTERED
THE SQUARE FROM THE EAST SIDE. WHEN THE
DEMONSTRATORS SHOUTED ANGRILY AT THE JENILLES, PLA
INFANTRY OPENED FIRE WITH TWO JEEP-MOUNTED MACHINE
GUNS, LAYING DOWN A BARRAGE THAT LASTED FOR FIFTEEN
MINUTES. WHEN THE CARNAGE CEASED, EAST CHANGAN ROAD
BETWEEN THE SQUARE AND THE BEIJING HOTEL WAS EMPTY
EXCEPT FOR ABOUT 25-30 MOVING AND STILL BODIES. THE
DEMONSTRATORS EDGED BACK ON TO THE STREET, LOADED THE
DEAD AND WOUNDED ONTO PEDICABS, AND TURNED ONCE AGAIN
TO CONFRONT THE LINE OF PLA RIFLEMEN.

18. 0620. A THIRD COLUMN OF ABOUT FORTY APCs,
TANKS, AND TRUCKS ROLLED DOWN EAST CHANGAN ROAD FROM
THE EAST AND ENTERED TIANANMEN. PLA INFANTRY LAID
DOWN A HEAVY TEN-MINUTE BARRAGE OF MACHINEGUN FIRE
WITH MANY CASUALTIES.

19. THROUGH BOTH OF THE EAST CHANGAN MASSACRES (5:30
AND 6:20), THE SOOTHING, MELLIFLUOUS VOICE BROADCAST
OVER THE GOVERNMENT LOUDSPEAKERS ON TIANANMEN
CONTINUED TO REASSURE "BEIJING FRIENDS" THAT THE
"CHAOS HAS ENDED, ORDER HAS BEEN RESTORED, AND THE
MOOLIGANS HAVE BEEN DEALT WITH."

20. 0730. THE LOUDSPEAKERS WENT SILENT FOR A FEW
MOMENTS, THEN THE FAMILIAR STRAINS OF THE UPBEAT
CHINESE NATIONAL ANTHEM FILLED THE AIR. HALFWAY
THROUGH, THE MUSIC WAS SMOTHERED BY RIFLE FIRE BEHIND
THE HISTORY MUSEUM, THEN BY ANOTHER BARRAGE OF
MACHINE GUN FIRE DIRECTED AT THE DEMONSTRATORS ON
EAST CHANGAN ROAD. WHEN THE ANTHEM CONCLUDED, A SOFT
FEMALE VOICE ANNOUNCED, "GOOD MORNING, COMRADES.
HAPPILY THE ANTI-REVOLUTIONARY ELEMENTS HAVE BEEN
DEFEATED. PEACE IS RESTORED TO OUR BELOVED TIANANMEN
SQUARE."

LILLEY

11. 0120. ADVANCING APCs ARRIVED AT NORTH XINHUA
STREET SPENDING GUNFIRE BEFORE THEM. WITH BULLETS
WHIZZING BY AND PEOPLE FALLING TO THE GROUND IN POOLS
OF BLOOD, DEMONSTRATORS REALIZED TO THEIR HORROR THAT
THE SOLDIERS WERE NOT FIRING BLANKS OR RUBBER BULLETS
AND HASTILY RETREATED TOWARD TIANANMEN AND DOWN SIDE
STREETS.

12. 0145. THE PLA FORCE REACHED TIANANMEN AND APCs
FANNED OUT IN A LINE ACROSS CHANGAN ROAD AT A POINT
EVEN WITH THE EASTERN FRONT OF THE GNP. THEY
REMAINED THERE UNMOVING, A ROW OF HEADLIGHTS FACING A
CROWD OF FIFTEEN THOUSAND DEMONSTRATORS ON EAST
CHANGAN ROAD.

13. 0155. CONGOFF MADE A LAST CIRCUIT THROUGH THE
TIANANMEN STUDENT ENCAMPMENT. THE NEWLY CONSTRUCTED
CITY OF LHM TENTS WAS VIRTUALLY EMPTY. APPROXIMATELY
3000 STUDENTS WERE BATHED TIGHTLY AROUND THE
MONUMENT TO THE REVOLUTIONARY HEROES, WITH A FOREST
OF FLAGS AND BANNERS ABOVE THEIR HEADS. THEY WOULD,
THEY TOLD CONGOFF, STAY AND WAIT FOR THE TROOPS TO
ARRIVE.

14. 0200. PLA TROOPS AND APCs IN FRONT OF MAO'S
PORTRAIT OPENED FIRE ON THE LARGE CROWD OF
DEMONSTRATORS ON CHANGAN ROAD; THE LATTER RETREATED
ON THE RUN EASTWARD TOWARD THE BEIJING HOTEL. THERE
WERE SCREAMS OF PAIN AS PEOPLE WERE HIT AT RANDOM AND
FELL TO THE GROUND. A MAN, WHO HAD JUST SHOUTED TO
CONGOFF "DO SOMETHING YOU FOREIGNERS MUST HELP US!"
FELL WITH A BULLET IN THE CENTER OF HIS FOREHEAD.

15. 0230. A DEADLY PATTERN OF CONFRONTATION ENSUED
FOR THE NEXT THREE HOURS ON EAST CHANGAN ROAD BETWEEN
TIANANMEN AND THE BEIJING HOTEL. ABOUT ONE HUNDRED
PLA SOLDIERS IN PRONE POSITION WERE LINED ACROSS THE
STREET NEXT TO THE HISTORY MUSEUM, THEIR RIFLES
POINTED TOWARD THE PARALLEL LINE OF DEMONSTRATORS
FIFTY YARDS TO THE EAST. EACH TIME THE SOLDIERS
OPENED FIRE, THE DEMONSTRATORS BROKE AND RAN FOR WHAT
LITTLE COVER WAS AVAILABLE; AFTER A FEW MINUTES, THE
DEMONSTRATORS WOULD BEGIN TO RETURN TO THE STREET,
PILE BODIES ON PEDICABS, AND REFORM THEIR LINE, UNTIL
THE NEXT BARRAGE OF GUNFIRE. WITH EACH VOLLEY, TEN
TO FIFTEEN DEMONSTRATORS FELL.

16. 0427. THE LIGHTS OF TIANANMEN, WHICH WENT OFF
AT 3:30, CAME BACK ON TO REVEAL AN ARMY BRISTLING
WITH ROW UPON ROW OF APCs, TANKS, AND TRUCKS. THE
LIGHTS ALSO REVEALED AT THE NORTHERN END OF THE
SQUARE, THE HEAPED REMAINS OF THE "GODDESS OF
DEMOCRACY," AND A COLUMN OF SMOKE ROSE ABOVE THE
MONUMENT TO THE REVOLUTIONARY HEROES. THE VIEW OF
THE SQUARE AND THE MONUMENT WAS BLOCKED BY BUILDINGS,
AND THE DEMONSTRATORS, ASSUMING THAT THE GUNFIRE ON
THE SQUARE MEANT THE STUDENTS WERE BEING KILLED,
CONTINUED THEIR HOPELESS, UNARMED CONFRONTATION
AGAINST THE PLA TROOPS.

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